

Pre-Statutory Voluntary Registration Scheme for Food Importers / Distributors

In response to a series of food incidents concerning imported food, the Government has announced a package of new measures to ensure the safety of imported food. One of these new initiatives is to require food importers in Hong Kong to register with the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) so that in the event of a food incident, the CFS can more readily identify the importer(s) concerned, trace the source of the problem food and take necessary action.

The Government is planning to introduce a new legislation to make it a mandatory requirement for all businesses engaged in food importation and distribution to registration with the CFS of their identity, contact details and the main food types which they import / distribute so that CFS can build up a register of all food importers as well as distributors in Hong Kong.

Before the enactment of the new legislation, the Government has launched a pre-statutory voluntary registration scheme (the Scheme) to encourage food importers / distributors to register with the Centre of their business according to food categories as indicated in the table below.

Stage One

- Poultry eggs
- Game, meat and poultry meat
- Live food animals / live poultry
- Milk, milk beverage, cream and frozen confection
- Vegetables and fruits
- Fish and fishery products

Stage Two

- Processed game, meat, poultry meat and aquatic products
- Egg Products, processed vegetables and fruit products, dairy products, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Cereals and grains products, herbs and spices, fats and oils, salts, condiments and sauces
- Non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages, infant/follow up/growing-up formula and baby food
- Sugars and sweets, snacks

- Miscellaneous (Chinese herbs*, health food / supplement*, mixed dishes and food not covered by the food types mentioned in Stage One and above five phases)

*Excluding those required to be registered under Chinese Medicine Ordinance Cap 549 & Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance Cap.138

Food importers and distributors are encouraged to notify the CFS of the details of their business, including name of the business, business registration number, address, name of the people-in-charge and his telephone and fax number. The information will facilitate CFS to enhance communication and consultation with the food industry (in the design of the future mandatory scheme and the drafting of the "Food Safety Bill"), notify them of any food concerns or alerts, and contact the businesses concerned more easily in the event of a food incident.

Through the registration system, the CFS will advise and encourage the food businesses to keep record of the movement of their food as a good business practice and to assist in enhancing food traceability. The CFS will, subject to the consent of the food business operators, upload to the CFS website the names of those companies under the Scheme for reference by the local food trade and overseas food suppliers.